

Pinedale Anticline Project Area SEIS

Questions and Answers

How long is the comment period for the SEIS?

45 days from the EPA's Notice of Availability published in the Federal Register.

Who proposed the new PAPA drilling project and what is the proposal?

Questar Exploration and Production (Questar), Shell Exploration and Production Company (Shell), and Ultra Resources Inc. (Ultra) propose to conduct year-round drilling and expand existing natural gas drilling and development operations in the Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA), south of Pinedale, Wyo. The analysis was based on the Operators' proposal to drill approximately 4,399 additional gas wells on up to 12,278 acres with a maximum of 600 well pads, at a rate of 232 wells drilled per year.

How much gas will be recovered from the PAPA as part of this project?

The potential recoverable natural gas from PAPA in the preferred action alternative will be approximately 21 trillion cubic feet (TCF).

What will this natural gas mean to the U.S.?

The estimated royalties of the natural gas is \$16 billion, half of which would go to the State of Wyoming and the other half to the federal government. The natural gas reserves in the PAPA will also be enough to heat 250 million homes for one year.

What is the impact of this project on air quality in the Pinedale Anticline?

Numerous contributing factors have resulted in air quality impacts in the Pinedale area, including energy development.

The air quality model of the PAPA project suggests that visibility may continue to be significantly impacted in the future. Air quality and visibility monitoring instruments were recently installed near Pinedale and surrounding communities. The model results also indicate that visibility in those local communities may be significantly impacted in the future.

"Significant" in this context means there may be a noticeable change in visibility over several days per year. Visibility may be measured by the number of days the view is hazy. Another visibility measurement is the number of miles an observer can see.

Although energy development in the PAPA, as well as other factors such as vehicular emissions and forest fires, may contribute to visibility impacts in the area, the visibility impacts and average of haziest days remains similar to the results over the past 15 years despite an increase in energy development.

Does the BLM regulate air quality?

The BLM does not have regulatory authority over air quality; that lies with the EPA and WDEQ. However, the BLM is required to analyze potential impacts to air quality values and disclose those to the public as part of the NEPA process. In addition, we work closely with the regulatory agencies to ensure new projects' impacts remain within acceptable levels.

What other agencies are involved in permitting oil and gas development?

Multiple agencies are involved with various aspects of oil and gas development. WOGCC permits down-hole spacing, APDs, Sundry Notices, and Geophysical projects on state or private minerals, they also co-approve all APDs on federal minerals; WDEQ issues Storm Water Discharge Permits for construction projects larger than 1 acre, well completion flaring, and waste water discharge, they also regulate air quality emissions and water quality standards; WSEO issues water use/depletion permits for water extracted from streams, lakes, rivers, and irrigation canals for industrial use, they also issue permits for water wells.

Where is the Pinedale Anticline Project Area?

The Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA) is located south of Pinedale and immediately north of the Jonah Field.

How much acreage does the PAPA cover?

The PAPA encompasses approximately 198,000 acres (80% federal, 5% state, 10% private, and 5% split estate).

Did BLM consult with any other agencies?

Yes. The State of Wyoming and its affected agencies have cooperating agency status and participate with the BLM on the Interdisciplinary (planning) Team. The BLM has also coordinated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, and the USDA-Forest Service on relevant parts of the document.

What would the drilling accomplish in the PAPA?

The proposed project would enhance recovery of natural gas present in the PAPA by drilling additional wells, while ensuring habitat reclamation and wildlife provisions in the area. The current proposal is to drill up to 4,399 additional gas wells on up to 12,272 acres of surface disturbance, at a rate of 232 wells drilled per year.

How will the companies extract the natural gas from the proposed project area?

Standard procedures as currently used in gas field developments throughout Wyoming would be employed during project development and operations, and all project activities would comply with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and stipulations. Gas from the project would be transported through pipelines linking the PAPA with existing regional pipelines north and south of the area.

Will directional drilling be used?

Yes. Directional drilling will allow multiple well bores to be drilled from a single well pad, and generally reduce the total acres of initial surface disturbance.

What alternatives were considered in the PAPA SEIS?

Three alternatives were analyzed in the SEIS; the No Action, Proposed Action, and the Preferred Alternative. The alternatives are described below.

- The *No Action* alternative rejects the Operator's proposal and continues existing management practices.

- The *Proposed Action* is to drill up to 4,399 additional gas wells on up to 12,278 acres, at a rate of 232 wells drilled per year.
- The *Preferred Alternative* proposes to allow a maximum of 12,272 acres of surface disturbance with up to a maximum of 4,399 wells.